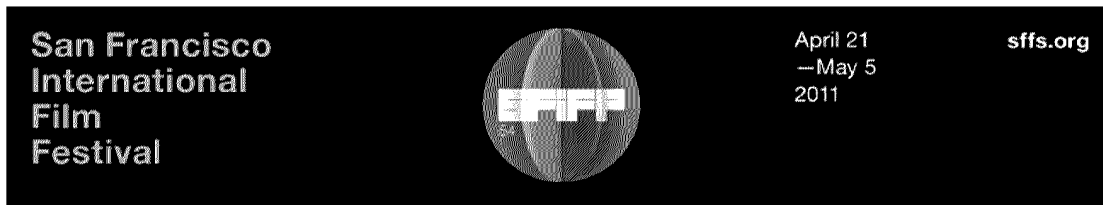


EXHIBIT 58

From: SFIFF54 Publicity Office <bproctor@sffs.org>
To: cwiglum@pixar.com <cwiglum@pixar.com>
Sent: 5/5/2011 7:31:28 PM
Subject: SFIFF54 Wraps Best 15 Days of the Year for World Cinema Lovers



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · MAY 5, 2011

Media Contacts: Hilary Hart · 415.561.5022 · hilary@sffs.org
Bill Proctor · 415.561.5024 · bproctor@sffs.org

**54TH SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
WRAPS THE BEST 15 DAYS OF THE YEAR
FOR WORLD CINEMA LOVERS**

**Longest-Running Film Festival in the Americas
Enjoys a Spectacular Year with Superb
Programming, Numerous Special Guests and Many
Memorable Sold-Out Events**

San Francisco, CA -- The **San Francisco Film Society** wrapped its **54th San Francisco International Film Festival** (April 21 - May 5) with 265 screenings of 193 films from 48 countries, which were attended by 278 filmmakers and industry guests from 22 countries around the globe.

"I had a hell of a good time!" exclaimed Frank Pierson, recipient of this year's Kanbar Award for excellence in screenwriting. "I enjoyed the informality of spirit and the professionalism of execution of the whole event."

This spirit was passed on to the audience, who helped the Festival to sell out 130 screenings during its 15-day run, emphasizing the strong demand for the unique programming that the Film Society brings to the Bay Area. Of particular popularity were the 134 screenings featuring special guests.

"Once again our audience brought a unique enthusiasm and knowledge to the Festival," said Graham Leggat, SFFS executive director. "This was combined with the Festival's original programming, headed by Director of Programming Rachel Rosen, which featured numerous live events and a

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**SFIFF54 Publicity
Department**

Hilary Hart
Director of Publicity
hilary@sffs.org
415.561.5022

Bill Proctor
Publicity Manager
bproctor@sffs.org
415.561.5024

Jason Berger
Publicist
jberger@sffs.org
415.561.5021

Julieta Esteban
Publicist
jesteban@sffs.org
415.561.5023

Betty Tweedy
Publicist
btweedy@sffs.org
415.561.5025

record number of films by female directors. Together they made this year's International truly one to remember."

The audience enthusiasm was also noticed by *Nostalgia for the Light* director Patricio Guzmán, who commented on the "excellent post-screening discussions."

Additionally, Film Society Awards Night, the organization's gala fundraiser, chaired this year by Melanie and Larry Blum, raised more than \$500,000. Proceeds from this event benefit the Film Society's Youth Education program, which serves roughly 10,000 Bay Area schoolchildren annually.

Sponsors and Partners

Among SFIFF54's leading corporate sponsors were Wells Fargo, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Blue Angel Vodka, Grolsch, Esurance, San Simeon Films, Saab, Visa, the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office, Cathay Pacific Airways, TV5 Monde, Bank of the West, the French American Cultural Society and the Consulate General of France, San Francisco. Local businesses were eager to work with the International as well. More than 65 restaurants supported the Festival and more than 435 hotel room nights were donated for Festival guests.

Star-Studded Nights

Film Society Awards Night honored three world-class film talents at Bimbo's 365 Club on April 28. Honorees were **Oliver Stone**, recipient of the Founder's Directing Award, presented by producer **Ed Pressman**; **Terence Stamp**, recipient of the Peter J. Owens Award for his acting career, presented by *Sight & Sound* editor **Nick James**; and **Frank Pierson**, who was presented his award by former president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences **Sid Ganis**.

"It was a real epiphany for me," said Terence Stamp. "The past few days have been a true hallmark in my life. It felt like a whole evening of untethered love."

Attending the festivities were director **Lynn Hershman Leeson** of *!Women Art Revolution*; board member **Carla Emil** and her husband **Rich Silverstein** of Goodby Silverstein; **Tom Bernard**, copresident of Sony Pictures Classics; board member **Celeste Meier** and her husband **Anthony Meier** of Anthony Meier Fine Arts; venture capitalist **Dick Kramlich** and his wife **Pamela**; board member **Todd Traina** and his wife **Katie**; gallery owner **Serge Sorokko** and his wife, model **Tatiana Sorokko**; board member and restaurateur **Doug Biederbeck** and his wife **Jennifer**; novelist **Robert Mailer Anderson** and his wife **Nicola Miner**; board member **Fred Levin** and his wife **Nancy Livingston**; filmmaker **Jake Kornbluth**; art dealer **Sabrina Buell**; president and founder of the Tin Man Fund **Ann Hatch**; head of Chronicle Books **Nion**

McEvoy; former ambassador **Jim Hormel**; and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives **Nancy Pelosi**.

"Film Society Awards Night was such a fun evening," observed an Awards Night guest. "Bimbo's and the supper club format for the evening made it so intimate, even though there were over 400 people. The Film Society really knows how to put on an exciting large-scale event."

Numerous guests graced the stage during SFIFF54, starting on Opening Night with *Beginners* director **Mike Mills** and actor **Ewan McGregor** and continuing throughout the Festival. Celebrated multimedia artist **Matthew Barney** was in town to receive the Golden Gate Persistence of Vision Award. Film archivist, programmer and showman **Serge Bromberg** presented a display of some of the earliest examples of 3-D films at the Castro Theatre.

"I was looking for an excuse to come back here," said Bromberg. "The Castro is *the* right place to show these films."

Legendary actor **Terence Stamp** enthralled the audience during his interview with film critic **Elvis Mitchell** before the screening of hard-to-find Federico Fellini film *Toby Dammit*. Up-and-coming actors **Zoe Saldana** and **Clifton Collins Jr.** entertained the audience while being honored with the Midnight Awards. Director **Errol Morris** returned to the Festival with his latest film, the documentary *Tabloid*.

"I owe my career in part to the world premiere screening of *The Thin Blue Line* at the Festival," reminisced Morris. "I will keep coming back."

Writer/director/actress **Miranda July** was in attendance with her latest work *The Future*. Writer/actress **Brit Marling** and actor **William Mapother** presented their film *Another Earth*. *The Mill and the Cross*, the latest piece by acclaimed Polish director **Lech Majewski**, was shown to enthusiastic crowds. Director **Maryam Keshavarz** brought her film *Circumstance* to the Festival.

The Festival wound down with a few final high profile screenings. The Centerpiece film, *Terri*, was shown with director **Azazel Jacobs** and stars **John C. Reilly**, **Creed Bratton** and **Jacob Wysocki** in attendance. Closing Night then featured a screening of *On Tour*, which was accompanied by a performance by Mimi Le Meaux, Kitten on the Keys, Evie Lovelle and Rocky Roulette, four of the burlesque dancers in the film.

Live & Onstage Events

Kicking off the Live & Onstage program on April 24 was the **State of Cinema Address**, delivered by

groundbreaking producer of independent films Christine Vachon. Also on April 24 was **From A to Zellner**, during which the prolific filmmaking duo the Zellner Brothers showcased selections from their considerable collection of short films, complete with accompanying song and dance numbers and their keyboard-playing grandfather. **New Skin for the Old Ceremony** presented a tribute to the legendary Leonard Cohen on April 26. The event featured 11 new short films inspired by his songs, a screening of the classic documentary *Ladies and Gentlemen . . . Mr. Leonard Cohen* and live renditions of several Cohen songs by local musicians Kelley Stoltz and the duo Pale Hoarse. Composer Stuart Staples collaborated with world-renowned French filmmaker Claire Denis on **Tindersticks: Claire Denis Film Scores 1996-2009**, in which Staples' band Tindersticks performed live their original scores to scenes from six of Denis' films. Finally, San Francisco's beloved **Porchlight** storytelling series returned to the Festival, captivating story lovers on May 3. The event featured six storytellers accompanied by a video clips, each telling tales of their filmmaking experiences.

Local Cinema

The 54th International featured 23 local narrative and documentary features and short films. Among the Bay Area features were **The Selling** by Emily Lou, **!Women Art Revolution** by Lynn Hershman Leeson, **American Teacher** by Vanessa Roth, **Better This World** by Kelly Duane de la Vega and Katie Galloway, **Crime After Crime** by Yoav Potash, **Miss Representation** by Jennifer Siebel Newsom and **Something Ventured** by Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine. Bay Area shorts were also abundant and included **The Cap** (Arjun Rihan), **Chromatastic** (Kerry Laitala), **Come to the Table** (Zoe Salnave), **The D Train** (Jay Rosenblatt), **Escape from Suburbia** (Mayana Bonapart), **Fire Bad** (Isaac Wolfe), **Independence in Sight** (Sydney Paige Matterson, Lauren Lindberg, Julian Compagni-Portis, Bonita Tindle), **India Export** (Raphael Linden), **Library of Dust** (Ondi Timoner, Robert James), **The Math Test** (Sam Rubin), **Play by Play** (Carlos Baena), **Self Portrait as a PowerPoint Proposal for an Amusement Park Ride** (Jonn Herschend), **The Snowman** (Kelly Wilson, Neil Wrischnik), **Tourist Trap** (Skye Thorstenson), **Young Dracula** (Alfred Seccombe) and **Z-Man** (Nat Talbot).

Schools at the Festival

This year SFFS Youth Education's Schools at the Festival program celebrated its 20th anniversary. Many filmmakers participated, with 23 local and international guests discussing their films and craft in classrooms during the program's 31 school visits, reaching 1360 elementary, middle and high school students. Teachers were also invited to bring their students to 18 school screenings held at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas. More than 3,000 students from schools across the Bay Area attended these

Schools at the Festival screenings, part of the year-round Youth Education program. SATF aims to develop media literacy, broaden insights into other cultures, enhance foreign language aptitude, develop critical thinking skills and inspire a lifelong appreciation of cinema.

An impromptu chant of "Kids love movies!" broke out from the young audience at a screening of the shorts collection *Do You See What I See?*, bringing this goal to life.

Salons and Master Classes at the Festival

Participating in three Master Classes, filmmakers and panelists engaged audiences with further discussion of the ideas presented in their films and related works. French film critic **Jean-Michel Frodon** explored the role of the critic in today's cinema; **Frank Pierson** discussed the craft of screenwriting and how it has evolved through the years; and finally, producer **Alison Dickey** and director **Azazel Jacobs** described their working relationship and how they came together to bring this year's Centerpiece film to the screen. Two Salons offered the opportunity for film scholars and filmmakers to engage in discussions with local cinephiles and engage in in-depth conversations beyond the typical postscreening Q&A. Author Susan Weiner lead **Expressions of French Cinema**, and professor Bill Nichols explored **The Social Justice Documentary**. In addition, SFIFF54 offered industry members a number of professional sessions and networking opportunities, an extension of the year-round Film Craft & Film Studies program offered by the San Francisco Film Society.

Award-Winning Films

Eleven films were in juried competition for the 15th annual \$15,000 New Directors Award, given to a first-time filmmaker whose work exhibits a unique artistic sensibility. The jury, comprised of Nick James, Daniela Michel and Marie Therese Guirgis, chose director Park Jung-bum's ***The Journals of Musan*** (South Korea), explaining, "The unexpected ways that the film fuses the personal with the sociopolitical makes it truly original, especially its sophisticated use of imagery and point of view."

The FIPRESCI jury, comprised of Ulrick Eriksen, Barbara Lorey De Lacharri re and Adam Nayman, chose ***The Salesman*** by S bastien Pilote (Canada). The jury described it as "a first feature with a precise sense of character and place, yet which is also provocatively ambivalent about the value of work in the aftermath of local economic collapse." FIPRESCI, the influential international organization of film critics, supports cinema as an art and as an autonomous means of expression. The San Francisco International Film Festival is one of only three festivals in the United States to host a FIPRESCI jury and award a FIPRESCI prize.

The International awarded close to \$100,000 in total prizes this year with \$60,000 to winners in three categories: investigative documentary feature (\$25,000), documentary feature (\$20,000) and Bay Area documentary feature (\$15,000). The Festival's Golden Gate Awards were held on Wednesday, May 4 at Temple Nightclub-Prana Restaurant, with a jury comprised of Dan Krauss, Mike Maggiore and Esther Robinson. The GGA for Best Investigative Documentary Feature was presented to ***Crime After Crime*** by Yoav Potash (USA). Best Documentary Feature and Best Bay Area Documentary Feature were both presented to ***Better This World*** by Kelly Duane de la Vega and Katie Galloway (USA).

The short film jury was made up of Andy Gillet, Max Goldberg and Kim Yutani. They awarded Best Documentary Short to ***Into the Middle of Nowhere*** by Anna Frances Ewert (Scotland/England). The Best Narrative Short was ***Blokes*** by Marialy Rivas (Chile). First place for Best Bay Area Short went to ***Tourist Trap*** by Skye Thorstenson (USA), with second place going to ***Young Dracula*** by Alfred Seccombe (USA). The GGA Youth Work winner was ***Z-Man*** by Nat Talbot (USA), with ***The Math Test*** by Sam Rubin (USA) receiving Honorable Mention. The Best Work for Kids and Families was ***Specky Four Eyes*** by Jean-Claude Rozec (France), with Honorable Mention going to ***The Snowman*** by Kelly Wilson and Neil Wrischnik (USA). The Best Animated Short was ***The External World*** by David O'Reilly (Ireland) and Best New Visions was ***Lost Lake*** by Zackary Drucker (USA).

The SFIFF54 Audience Awards gave filmgoers the opportunity to select their favorite narrative feature and documentary. The Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature went to Denis Villeneuve's ***Incendies***, with Takashi Miike's ***13 Assassins*** also scoring well with festivalgoers. The Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature went to Yoav Potash's ***Crime After Crime***, with Kelly Duane de la Vega and Katie Galloway's ***Better This World*** also tallying high votes from the viewers.

For information visit fest11.sffs.org.

For photos and press materials visit sffs.org/pressdownloads.

San Francisco Film Society

Building on a 50-plus-year legacy of bringing the best in world cinema to the Bay Area, the San Francisco Film Society is a national leader in exhibition, education and filmmaker services.

The Film Society presents 300 days of exhibition each year, reaching a total audience of 130,000 people. Its acclaimed education program introduces international cinema and media literacy to more than 15,000 teachers and students and presents 120 classes and workshops annually. Through the filmmaker services program essential creative and business services, and funding totaling millions of dollars, are provided to deserving filmmakers of all levels.

The Film Society seeks to elevate all aspects of film culture, offering a wide range of activities that engage emotions, inspire action, change perceptions and advance knowledge. A 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, it is largely donor and member supported. Patronage and membership provides discounted prices, access to grants and residencies, private events and a wealth of other benefits.

54th San Francisco International Film Festival

The 54th San Francisco International Film Festival runs April 21 - May 5 at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas, the Castro Theatre, New People and SFMOMA in San Francisco and the Pacific Film Archive Theater in Berkeley. Held each spring for 15 days, the International is an extraordinary showcase of cinematic discovery and innovation in the country's most beautiful city, featuring 15 juried awards, 200 films and live events with upwards of 100 participating filmmakers and diverse audiences of 75,000+ people.

For more information visit sffs.org.

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